

WALMESLEY OF LICHFIELD, STAFFS

ARMS:

CREST:

Perhaps of a Lancashire family.

----- Walmesley
chn: Richard Walmesley

Richard Walmesley of Lichfield, Staffs gentleman e1615-1688

[? m Ann -----; i as Mrs. 4 May 1689 Lichfield Cathedral]
i as Mr. 14 Aug 1688 Lichfield Cathedral
(appraised several probate inventories of residents of Lichfield Close) 1670s
chn: [?] Richard Walmesley
[?] Jane Walmesley m (by VG Licence, 15 Feb 1682.3, for Repton, Derbys) Richard
Rider (Deputy Registrar of Lichfield) c1661-a1733 [SLG]

[? FATHER OF]

►William Walmesley (Vicar-General of Lichfield) c1645-1713

1698-1713

{William Walmisley}
m 22 Apr 1675 Lichfield Cathedral: Dorothy Gilbert 3rd dau and coheir of Humphrey
Gilbert of Fradley in Alrewas, Staffs c1612-c1679 QV; b c1659; (aged 6) 1665;
i as widow 28 Oct 1719 Lichfield Cathedral
d in the evening 15 Jul 1713 [SHAW I 298-300]; i as Chancellor 18 Jul 1713 Lichfield
Cathedral; Will (PCC) 8 Mar 1712.3/22 Aug 1719 [see below]
(Freeman, Curriers Co, Lichfield) 1681
(Proctor, Lichfield)
(Registrar, Lichfield)-1692
(Vicar-General, Lichfield) 1698-d
(B.L., awarded by Bishop Hough) 1700
(probably a Whig)
(M.P., Lichfield) 1701
(as a Staffordshire Land Tax Commissioner had an annual income from land of £100 or
more) e1702

[SIMMS]

chn: Ann Walmesley c 9 May 1676 Lichfield Cathedral
Mary Walmesley c 23 Jun 1679[sic] Lichfield Cathedral; i 11 Dec 1678[sic]
Lichfield Cathedral
Gilbert Walmesley c 4 Oct 1682 Lichfield Cathedral; (Registrar of Lichfield)
[SCD] [ODNB]
Richard Walmesley c 3 Dec 1683 Lichfield Cathedral; i 26 Dec 1683 Lichfield
Cathedral
William Walmesley c 15 Oct 1684 Lichfield Cathedral [SCD]
John Walmesley c 15 Apr 1686 Lichfield Cathedral; i 16 Apr 1686 Lichfield
Cathedral
Elizabeth Walmesley c 17 Oct 1687 Lichfield Cathedral
Ann Walmesley c 24 Jul 1689 Lichfield Cathedral
[?] Thomas Walmesley [? c 11 Dec 1689 Lichfield Cathedral]
Richard Walmesley i 13 Jul 1691 Lichfield Cathedral

*WILLIAM WALMISLEY, of the Close of Lichfield Cathedral, co. Stafford, Esq. Will
dated 8 Mch. 1712/13. Universal legatee, my wife. Signed, W. Walmisley. Wits., E.
Walmisley and W. Walmisley jun. Proved 22 Aug. 1719, in P.C.C. (Browning, 154), by
Dorothy Walmisley, widow, the relict. [READE VIII 119]*

Gilbert Walmesley (Registrar of Lichfield) 1682-1751

c 4 Oct 1682 Lichfield Cathedral

m 30 Mar 1736 Lichfield Cathedral: Magdalen Aston dau of Sir Thomas Aston of Aston, Cheshire 2nd Baronet 1666-1725 [SCD]

d 3 Aug 1751; i Lichfield Cathedral

(aged ?16, matric. Trinity, Oxford) 14 Apr 1698; (at Inner Temple); (called to the bar) 1707; (Registrar, Lichfield Ecclesiastical Court) [SIMMS]

Walmisley, Gilbert (bap. 1682, d. 1751), friend of Samuel Johnson, was descended from an ancient family in Lancashire. He was baptized in Lichfield Cathedral on 4 October 1682, the son of William Walmisley (d. 1713), chancellor of Lichfield from 1698 to 1713, and MP for the city in 1701, who married in Lichfield Cathedral on 22 April 1675 Dorothy Gilbert, and was buried in the cathedral on 18 July 1713. Gilbert matriculated as a commoner from Trinity College, Oxford, on 14 April 1698, but did not take a degree. In 1707 he was called to the bar at the Inner Temple, and became registrar of the ecclesiastical court of Lichfield. He was probably a near relative of William Walmisley, prebendary of Lichfield from 1718 to 1720, and dean from 1720 to 1730.

Walmisley, 'the most able scholar and the finest gentleman' in the city according to Anna Seward (Poetical Works, 1.l.xix), lived in the bishop's palace at Lichfield for thirty years; and Johnson, then a stripling at school, spent there, with David Garrick, 'many cheerful and instructive hours, with companions such as are not often found'. He was 'a whig with all the virulence and malevolence of his party', but polite and learned, so that Johnson could not name 'a man of equal knowledge', and the benefit of this intercourse remained to him throughout life (S. Johnson, *Lives of the English Poets*, ed. G. B. Hill, 1905, 2.20-21). He endeavoured in 1735 to procure for Johnson the mastership of a school at Solihull in Warwickshire, but without success. An abiding tribute to his memory was paid by Johnson in his life of Edmund Smith.

On 30 March 1736 Walmisley, 'being tired since the death of my brother of living quite alone', married Magdalen, commonly called Margaret or Margery (bap. 1709, d. 1786), fourth of the eight daughters of Sir Thomas Aston, bt, of Aston, Cheshire. His marriage was said to have extinguished certain expectations entertained by Garrick of a settlement from his friend. Walmisley died at Lichfield on 3 August 1751, and his widow died on 11 November 1786, aged seventy-seven. Both are buried in a vault near the south side of the west door in Lichfield Cathedral. A poetical epitaph by Thomas Seward was inscribed on a temporary monument which stood over the grave during the year after his death; it is printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (55/1, 1785, 166). It is said that Johnson promised to write an epitaph for him, but procrastinated until it was too late; he may be acquitted of any share in the composition printed as his in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (67/2, 1797, 726). A prose inscription to Walmisley's memory is on the south side of the west door of Lichfield Cathedral. Johnson's eulogy from his 'Life' of Smith was also inscribed on an adjoining monument.

Walmisley's library was sold by Thomas Osborne of Gray's Inn in 1756. The Latin translation of Byrom's verses, beginning 'My time, O ye muses', printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (15, 1745, 102-3) as by G. Walmsley of 'Sid. Coll. Camb', and sometimes attributed to Gilbert Walmisley, is no doubt by Galfridus Walmsley, BA from that college in 1746. Some correspondence between Garrick and Johnson and Walmisley is printed in Garrick's *Private Correspondence* and in Johnson's *Letters*. Anna Seward commented that 'while Johnson and Garrick are remembered, their first patron will not be forgotten' (Poetical Works, 1.l.xii): Walmisley 'sowed benevolence, and reaped immortality' (*Private Correspondence*, 1.1).

W. P. Courtney, rev. Freya Johnston

William Walmesley (Dean of Lichfield) ?1684-1730

[? c 15 Oct 1684 Lichfield Cathedral]

d 18 Sep 1730

(at Trinity, Cambridge); (B.A.) 1707; (M.A.) 1711; (Prebendary, Lichfield Ulveton);
(Canon, Lichfield) 7 May 1718-20; (Dean, Lichfield) 7 May 1720-d; (Vicar,
Packington, Leics) 20 Mar 1729-d [SIMMS]

—

www.FS (2/3/05)

—